Q: What is today's announcement?
A: We are announcing two new versions of Visual Studio.NET, called Visual Studio.NET Enterprise Architect and Enterprise Developer. The new versions are high-end tools with new features designed to help enterprises move to XML Web Services.

Q: What is the importance of the announcement?
A: CIO's, BDMs, enterprise architects and enterprise developers are starting to realize new opportunities involved with XML Web Services in both internal and external systems integration. The revenue opportunities can be astounding. But enterprises aren't completely sure what the next step is in getting to Web Services. So today, Microsoft is announcing innovative new capabilities that enterprise customers can use to step into this new era of Web Services. These capabilities build on the highly successful Visual Studio development platform, and open up new opportunities for 3rd party enterprise tool vendors.

Q: Who is the target customer for this product?
A: High-end corporate developers, application architects, enterprise system integrators, CIOs and BDMs.

Q: When will this be released?
A: VSEA and VSED will be released with the breadth of the Visual Studio.NET family later this calendar year.

Q: How much will this cost?
A: Pricing has not yet been determined.

Q: How does this affect the Rational relationship?
A: Rational is one of our premier partners and will continue to be so. Rational and others are supporting our efforts because they have seen time and again that Microsoft can expand the market for their offerings. Visual Studio.NET has been designed as a platform that 3rd parties can leverage to reach a broader customer base.

Q: Is this Microsoft's attempt to crowd Rational out of the high-end tools market?
A: We anticipate our tools broadening the market for Rational's tools, not diminishing it. But overall, no, we both compete and cooperate with Rational – it is a healthy and productive relationship.

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Studio.NET has been designed as a platform that 3rd parties can leverage to reach a broader customer base with their offerings.

Q: Does this replace VSEE?
A: Because “Enterprise” encompasses a variety of development needs, the high end of the product line now includes an Enterprise Developer product, which replaces VSEE, and Enterprise Architect, a superset of VSED providing additional features for architects.

Q: What is the difference between VSED and VSEA?
A: We heard from our enterprise customers that architects and developers have unique needs, so we created two versions of VS.NET to address them. On one hand, companies need the tools to enable architects and senior programmers to specify best practices and design the application, and on the other need the functionality to enable the rest of the development team to execute on the vision of the senior programmers and architects. With these tools, Microsoft is solving the needs of both audiences.

Q: Why did MS decide to create a new version?
A: Application architects have unique requirements that are beyond the typical enterprise developer. We are providing tools that help architects perform the key activities they are chartered with.

Q: What are the other members/products in the Visual Studio family?
A: Enterprise Developer and Enterprise Architect have been announced. Visual Studio Professional is the product that is being used broadly in the public beta. There are some additional products on the horizon that we are not talking about today.

Q: Does this signal that VSEE customers are unhappy?
A: No, in fact quite the opposite. We want to be sensitive to the fact that only a subset of customers will require the new architect features and we shouldn’t charge every enterprise developer for them.

Q: Isn’t MS late to the game in terms of providing lifecycle tools?
A: Our traditional strength is in RAD tools – coding and debugging. But we’ve been building enterprise tools since 1997 and have had great results. For example, GartnerGroup now positions Microsoft as one of the top enterprise tools vendors, a key indicator in this space.

Q: What about Visual SourceSafe? Is that the versioning functionality referred to in this release?

A: It will be included with Visual Studio.NET Enterprise Architect and Enterprise Developer.

Q: Aren't the modeling features in VSEA just Visio?
A: The modeling capabilities in VSEA are based on core technologies in Visio, but have been extended to include support for .NET and other features important to developers.

Q: What happened to Visual Modeler?
A: The software modeling technologies in Visual Studio.NET are now based on core technologies in Visio.

Q: What's happening with Visual Component Manager?
A: We will continue to support VCM 6, but there is a lot of industry momentum behind UDDI and other open protocols for component description, discovery, and publishing. It just makes sense to support the technologies that so many other major industry players have thrown their weight behind. We will continue to work with standards bodies and others in the industry as these evolve and provide appropriate support within Visual Studio.

Q: What about the Great Plains/Rational announcement? Why aren't they using Visual Studio.NET?
A: Great Plains will be using the Visual Studio.NET enterprise features in the next version of their products. One of the reasons they selected Rational for this release was because Rational provided an OEM version of their tools. For example, the version of Rose does not include code generation features.

Q: How does Visual Studio.NET fit in with the rest of the .NET strategy?
A: .NET is all about distributed computing for the web, using XML Web Services as the building blocks. Visual Studio is how you construct and assemble those building blocks. Visual Studio.NET is the starting line for customers who want to build Web Services.

Q: What does this have to do with hailstorm?
A: Hailstorm is a set of XML Web Services that can be incorporated into a .NET application. Visual Studio will help developers integrate those services.